



176th Wing • Alaska Air National Guard

# eGuardian

July 28, 2022

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## July/August 2022 Quarterly Drill

### **ANNUAL AWARDS CEREMONY AND FAMILY DAY** *July 30*

This is a reminder that the awards ceremony is from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. Saturday, July 30 with a show time of 8 a.m. Please feel free to bring your family to the awards ceremony. The entry-authorization list (EAL) will be posted at the Government Hill gate for access for those that require it. The ceremony will be uniform of the day, and, as we transition, to Family Day civilian clothes are authorized.

### **70TH ANNIVERSARY GALA** *Aug. 4*

This is a reminder for the 70th Anniversary Gala at the Sheraton Anchorage Hotel Thursday, August 4. Doors open at 5 p.m. for the social hour with the formal program and dinner beginning at 5:45 p.m. Dress is semi-formal attire, military uniforms are optional (white shirt with no name tape or hat).

### **144TH AIRLIFT SQUADRON CHANGE OF COMMAND** *Aug. 1*

Lt. Col. Jeremy Vancil will succeed Lt. Col. Nathan Schauermann as 144th Airlift Squadron commander during a Monday, Aug. 1 ceremony at 1:44 p.m. in Hangar 18's East Bay.

### **HRE/POSH TRAINING** *July 31*

176th Wing Equal Opportunity Program practitioners will be hosting HRE (Human Relations Education) / POSH (Prevention of Sexual Harassment) discussions Sunday July 31 from 10-11 a.m. Unit training managers will schedule overdue members for class in ARCNet and also provide members with the Zoom link. Members may log in individually or participate in group watch parties (one person logs in and projects the class on the screen).

Contact Capt. Kimberly Westfall at (907) 428-6664 with any questions.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY TRAINING** *July 31 & Aug. 1*

176th Wing Equal Opportunity will host two EO training sessions this drill in the 176th Logistics Readiness Squadron classroom at 10 a.m. Sunday, July 31 and Monday Aug. 1 on the 2nd floor at 8515 Saville Rd.

- Squadron Commanders:
  - If you took command between November 2021 and July 2022, you are due for a DEOCS organizational climate survey. In accordance with AFI 36-2710, paragraph 7.3, commanders will conduct a DEOCS within 180 days of taking command. Contact Captain Westfall at (907) 854-1030 or email [kimberly.c.westfall.mil@army.mil](mailto:kimberly.c.westfall.mil@army.mil) to get your survey initiated.
  - In accordance with AFI 36-2710, commanders must receive a Key Personnel Briefing from EO upon taking command. Contact Captain Westfall.
- Leaders: please continue to notify 176th Wing EO whenever you encounter an incident or issue that could be EO-related (purview: race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual harassment.) In accordance with AFI 36-2710, paragraph 4.8, EO is required to assist in documentation and provide consultation for commander-worked issues within EO purview.

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## **EVENTS / OPPORTUNITIES**

### **CHILD CARE AWARE OF AMERICA**

Child Care Aware of America is a Department of the Air Force child care fee assistance program available to all Air Force Active Duty, Guard/Reserve Active Duty, or Dual Status Reserve Technicians. It supplements the cost of off-base child care so members only pay what they would at the base Child Development Center. Additional Information regarding this program can be found here:

<https://www.childcareaware.org/fee-assistancerespite/military-families/air-force/fee-assistance/>

## **CATCH A SERIAL OFFENDER (CATCH) PROGRAM**

The CATCH Program gives people making a sexual assault report where the name of the suspect is not known by law enforcement, an opportunity to anonymously submit suspect information to help the Department of Defense identify serial offenders.

Submit your photos through July 31 on the AKNG SAPR Facebook [page](#). Be sure to include your name, date and general location in Alaska.

## **NOMINATE YOUR EMPLOYER FOR THE 176TH WING BOSSLIFT**

Your employer will receive a tour of the 176th facilities, get to speak to Air Guard members, receive information about hiring Guard members, have lunch, be thanked for their support to Guard members, and based on mission and weather hopefully can take a flight.

- Nominate your employer by emailing Amy Arsenault at [akesgrstaff@gmail.com](mailto:akesgrstaff@gmail.com)
- Provide your name, civilian company name, name of manager/supervisor/owner, and their email and phone number
- Limited space is available so send information in soon
- Bosslift will take place Aug. 23, 2022
- Any questions call Amy at 907-428-6576

## **PATRIOT AWARD**

Are you a traditional Guard member that works in our community?  
Does your civilian employer support you being able to serve in the Guard?  
If you answered yes to these questions, you should submit your manager/supervisor for the ESGR Patriot Award. It is a simple online submission.

The certificate comes to the Alaska ESGR office, and we notify you to coordinate a presentation for the recipient. Takes about 45 days until we receive it. It is a great way to say thank you for showing their support.

Here is the link for quick submission:

Service Member: <https://esgr.mil/Employer-Awards/Patriot-Award/Form>

If you have any questions or need assistance stop by and see our full time ESGR staff member in room D-103, Amy Arsenault, [amy.m.arsenault.ctr@army.mil](mailto:amy.m.arsenault.ctr@army.mil), 907-428-6576.

## **ALASKA NATIONAL GUARD OFFICER'S ASSOCIATION EVENTS**

The Alaska National Guard Officer's Association (ANGOA) has worked hard along with Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States (EANGUS) to bring Arctic Guardians free fishing licenses, free vehicle registration, and many other benefits received through our national affiliation with the National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS). But we can't do it without you and your membership!

1. ANGOA is offering lifetime digital memberships to CGOs for the extremely low price of \$125 and only \$175 for Field Grades and above. Squadrons with a 100 percent officer membership are eligible for a pizza party for those officers or cash donation to the squadron towards unit activities! Details can be found here: <https://angoa.org/membership-account/membership-levels/>

2. Don't miss out! This year's NGAUS Conference is scheduled for Aug. 26-29 in Columbus, Ohio. It's a great opportunity to hear national level senior leaders speak on the future of the Guard and network with more than 2,000 Army and Air Guard officers from all 50 states, three territories, and the District of Columbia. AGRs are authorized permission leave and technicians are authorized administrative leave to attend with supervisor concurrence.

Details can be found here: <https://www.ngaus.org/events/144th-general-conference-exhibition>

To register for the conference, please contact Maj Yutashea Zirkle at [yutashea.zirkle.1@us.af.mil](mailto:yutashea.zirkle.1@us.af.mil)

## **THE BRAIN HEALTH PROJECT IS (FINALLY!) A GO!!**

176th wing members have access to state-of-the-art, evidence-based, brain fitness/cognitive training by signing up for the Brain Health Project.

Currently 100 members have signed up, and there is space for 50 more wing members.

More intel on the Brain Health Project from the Center for Brain Health, University of Texas, Dallas --- Recruiting video [https://videos.ctfassets.net/n7r832fbv3mz/4z1hi5BGh6RnZGzS18TEAY/29082fa8455fd2f3342da32842835c21/Jz\\_Mike\\_MTEC2022\\_smaller.mp4](https://videos.ctfassets.net/n7r832fbv3mz/4z1hi5BGh6RnZGzS18TEAY/29082fa8455fd2f3342da32842835c21/Jz_Mike_MTEC2022_smaller.mp4)

You can use the portal link now to enroll and start taking your initial assessment. Your personal information will be solely with the Center of Brain Health researchers. The portal link is: <http://MTEC.thebrainhealthproject.org>

Again, this is an amazing opportunity to improve your overall brain fitness. Evidence based research has shown that one's ability to efficiently/effectively improve their cognitive processes leads to generalized improvements in many areas of life. Although it has taken over a year for the project to start, I am thrilled to take you on this journey alongside me!

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Diann Richardson, LCSW  
176 WG Director of Psychological Health  
(907) 551-0283  
[diann.richardson.1@us.af.mil](mailto:diann.richardson.1@us.af.mil)

## **ONGOING FREE COUNSELING SERVICES**

Military Family Life Counselors (MFLC) provide short term non-medical solution-focused counseling to support military families with the challenges of deployments, reintegration, parenting, relationship issues, conflict resolution, anger management and other life issues. They provide free, confidential services on and off military installations, flexible service delivery in non-traditional settings and times. With the exception of child abuse, domestic violence, mandatory reporting, and duty to warn situations, services are confidential.

In response to COVID-19, MFLCs are providing services via secure, encrypted video teleconference.

For more information and to schedule an appointment, call Husch Hathorne-Cantil at 907-382-1407. Appointments are available within 24-48 hours.

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## **SERVICES / ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **MILITARY ONESOURCE RESOURCES**

Did you know that Military OneSource is bigger than a 24/7/365 toll free number? The program offers more than just free non-medical counseling. It also provides assistance for the deployment readiness cycle. Military OneSource is a Department of Defense funded program that aids eligible service and family members with building resiliency; both within the military culture and on the homefront. To help strengthen one's resiliency skillset,

Military OneSource offers many activities that you and your family members can partake in. For example:

MWR Digital Library:

- Ancestry.com Library Edition - unlock the story of your family using more than 8,000 resources.
- Consumer Reports – are you looking to make a purchase? Use this online library to access 1,000+ ratings, reviews, expert buying advice, product comparisons, consumer user reviews and product video clips.
- EBSCO Audiobooks - more than 2,000 audiobooks in different subjects and categories available for free download.
- Mango Languages - check out this digital language learning program for learners of all levels, with courses in more than 70 different foreign languages, 21 English language courses, and 44 specialty courses.
- Morningstar Investment Research Center - find information and advice on mutual funds, stocks, exchange-traded funds and market returns. Track investments, access daily market news and commentary, view snapshots on investments and interact on the research center forums.
- PressReader Digital Newspapers - unlimited digital access to more than 7,000 newspapers from 120 countries in more than 60 different languages. These newspapers are provided in full-color, full-page format, and appear on your screen exactly as they appear on the news stand, many providing instant translation and audio.
- Stingray Qello Concerts - enjoy more than 1700 live moments in music history with the world's largest collection of full-length concerts and music documentaries streamed on-demand to just about any digital device. From the 1920s to today's hottest artists, Qello Concerts spans more than 30 genres, from classical to rock, reggae to country.
- Small Business Builder - helps patrons interested in planning and optimizing their businesses or nonprofits. Built for aspiring entrepreneurs and those with existing small businesses, providing a step-by-step process supported by a variety of recognized tools that enable users to produce complete business plans and other documents essential for gaining access to capital and growing their enterprise.

- Universal Class - over 500 online courses to aid with personal and professional interests: including FREE CEUs, plus online books, movies and music for all ages. Over 40 different references to use.
- Weiss Financial Ratings - Enjoy access to financial literacy tools on retirement planning, home and mortgage, insurance strategies, and saving for your child's education.
- Chill Drills: An overview of four simple drills to help reverse the symptoms of stress. These drills can help slow your heart rate, lower your blood pressure and reduce the level of stress hormones in your body. By doing these drills regularly, you can lower your baseline stress level and be better prepared to deal with stress in the future. Order yours online (free shipping) or download to your smartphone.
- MilTax - free tax services, which provides easy-to-use software that is designed specifically for the military community and is available mid-January through mid-October. MilTax also offers free consultations with experts trained to help military members and their families take command of their taxes.

Many other resources are located online with just a click of the mouse or online chat with a trained consultant to provide more guidance with your ideal topic. See: [www.militaryonesource.mil](http://www.militaryonesource.mil).

## **AIRMAN SAFETY APP**

If there was a way to anonymously and quickly make safety reports on your phone, would you use it? There's an app for that. The Aviation Safety Action Program (ASAP) a voluntary, identity-protected means of reporting safety issues that increase the risk to Aviation, Occupational, or Weapons Safety. The goal of the program is to prevent future mishaps and strengthen a culture of safe, effective mission accomplishment. The two ways to submit an ASAP report are on the website (<https://asap.safety.af.mil>) or the smartphone app "Airmen Safety App." Contact: your friendly safety office (551-7604, [176wg.se.176wg@us.af.mil](mailto:176wg.se.176wg@us.af.mil))

## **UPCOMING AWS DAYS**

The 176th Wing is essentially shut down for business on the upcoming Alternate Work Schedule days. RDs (rescheduled drills) and AT days

should not be scheduled for these times. The full AWS calendar can be found on the new Wing SharePoint in the Resource Library.

August: 12, 26

September: 2, 23

October: 7, 21, 28

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## WING NEWS

### **ARMSTRONG SUCCEEDS CALABRO AS 176TH OPERATIONS GROUP COMMANDER**

By Staff Sgt. Daniel Robles | 176th Wing Public Affairs

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — Alaska Air National Guard Col. Joshua Armstrong succeeded Col. Matthew Calabro as the 176th Operations Group commander during a July 14 ceremony here.

The group provides wartime and peacetime mission support of deployment operations, combat search and rescue, air control, rescue coordination and strategic airlift for the 176th Wing.

During the ceremony, Calabro received the Legion of Merit. The award citation highlighted the 176th OG's efforts under his command. Under Calabro's leadership, 176th Wing personnel participated in the largest noncombatant evacuation operation in Afghanistan. They also moved thousands of pounds of cargo and troops throughout the world including during deployments to Africa and Iraq.

Calabro thanked the men and women of the operations group for their tenacity and dedication.

"No other group in the Air National Guard has three distinct mission sets like us that conduct 24/7, 365 missions for the active duty and Guard," he said. "Thank you for your sacrifice and your ability to make the impossible possible. Your focus was and continues to be warfighting excellence."

Calabro will soon retire after 22 years of service.

Armstrong addressed the group after thanking his family for supporting him.



"Operations group, you're amazing, and you can make a difference during this global uncertainty," he said. "I know you're up to it and I'm honored to be with you in this journey. I ask for your continued sacrifice and service in the future. In doing so I swear I will not take it lightly."

## **REFLECTIONS OF PRIDE: ARCTIC GUARDIAN RECALLS CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES OF SERVING AS A GAY WOMAN**

Commentary Master Sgt. Jeanette Fuller | 176th Maintenance Squadron

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — As I approach retirement, and as the Alaska Air National Guard celebrates Pride Month, I reflect on my experience as a gay woman in a military career spanning over 30 years.

I enlisted in the Georgia Air National Guard in 1990 and later joined the Alaska Air National Guard in 1990 and again in 2012. I owe much of who I am today to my time and experience in the Air National Guard.

There have most assuredly been struggles related to being gay, but overall, I believe the military has made huge strides forward in both recognizing our right to serve and the historical contributions of the many years we served in silence and solitude.

When Don't Ask Don't Tell was rescinded in 2010, I was approached by old Alaska Air National Guard co-workers and friends who asked if I was willing to rejoin the 176th Wing? I admit that I hesitated.

I endured a nine-month long investigation from 1999 to 2000, which eventually led me to leave the Guard, and I had no idea what to expect. My friends assured me that much had changed and that I wouldn't recognize the unit. I believed them and re-enlisted.

They were correct. Indeed, a lot has changed, and I have absolutely no regrets.

Reflecting on the challenging times, I come back to a crisp dawn morning in the late 1990s. My partner pulled into a secluded parking lot on Kulis Air National Guard Base far from the busy flightline. She helped me haul my duffel and chem bags out of the SUV, looked around to be certain no one saw us, and gave me a quick peck on the cheek. She handed me a travel mug of steaming coffee and told me to be careful. I said goodbye and made my way a quarter mile down to the aircraft that was to take me to our deployed location.

As I boarded the aircraft, couples – some with children, others without – hugged, kissed and said their goodbyes. I felt happy for them but envied the ease of their interactions as I thought of my loved one heading home with no one to share her anxiety for my safety. I prayed that nothing would happen to me because I knew she wouldn't be the first to be notified, if at all.

Later that same year, I witnessed a retirement ceremony for the first time where a wife was present with her husband. She was awarded a certificate and was publicly acknowledged for her participation and service during her husband's career. He handed her flowers, spoke eloquently of her meaning to him, and kissed her in gratitude. I was very happy, but once again felt sadness as well as envy.

Fast forward 20-odd years. I was standing in a little chapel in Seattle with the same partner. We exchanged private vows as a couple years earlier, but as we exchanged them again that day, we became legally acknowledged as a married couple in all 50 states. And with this acknowledgement came the rights and privileges we had previously been denied.

Back in the 176th Wing, my spouse received a dependent ID, and I made a will with her listed as my emergency contact. Preparing for another deployment, I found peace knowing that the United States Air Force and the Alaska Air National Guard acknowledged her as my legal spouse and that she would be notified first if I was injured or worse. She would have rights should I be killed. She would receive my remains. She would be honored with a flag should I perish.

At the departure on deployment day, she and my in-laws sent me off on my mission. I stood in the center of the crowd hugging them, gave my spouse a quick peck on the cheek and said goodbye. I introduced my family and spouse to my fellow deployers and their spouses and families. There was no awkwardness. We are one team, one fight, and I know my wife will never again be alone in her anxiety.

I am planning my retirement now. I talked to a fellow retiree and asked for advice on food and, most importantly, on the flowers for my spouse. I am excited. Time has passed so quickly. My wife will pin on my retirement pin. I will hand her flowers, and we will be recognized together. I will thank her for all the mugs of coffee on cold winter mornings, for the goody bags on deployment, and for the times she supported me in anonymity and, thank heaven, in public.

I will tell my peers that there were many days I refused to face the snow and ice and wedge myself into the bowels of a merciless, broken aircraft, and would not have come in were it not for her “gentle” nudges to “buck up and do my duty.”

I am proud today. Proud to be a salty, often cranky but capable, maintainer. Proud to serve in the profession of arms. Proud to be a gay woman openly serving in the finest military unit in this country and the world with people I admire and respect. Proud to celebrate with my unit the wing’s 70th birthday.

I am proud to be able to retire soon from an organization that has given me so many opportunities and a fair share of challenges, a unit that shaped me into the person my mother proudly calls “daughter.”

## **ARCTIC GUARDIANS RESCUE 3 PLANE CRASH VICTIMS FROM 2 SAME-DAY INCIDENTS**

By David Bedard | 176th Wing Public Affairs

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — Alaska Air National Guardsmen of the 176th Wing rescued three plane crash victims in two incidents July 27 — one near Tustumena Lake about 70 miles south of Anchorage and the other near Chakachamna Lake about 90 miles west of Anchorage.

The first mission with two occupants opened in response to the Super Cub’s 406 MHz Emergency Locator Transmitter that was activated during the crash near Tustumena Lake. The second mission with a single occupant opened in response to another Super Cub’s 406 ELT.

At the request of the Alaska Rescue Coordination Center, Alaska Air National Guardsmen of 210th and 212th Rescue Squadrons launched on an HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter.

The Super Cub pilot used an inReach satellite communications device to talk with AKRCC controllers, providing them with critical information.

The 210th RQS located the crash site and landed before loading the survivors, and 212th RQS pararescuemen assessed the injured occupant. The other occupant was uninjured.

The HH-60 crew transported the two survivors to Providence Alaska Medical Center in Anchorage where they were released to medical personnel.

For the second mission, 176th Wing launched a 210th RQS HH-60 and a 211th RQS HC-130J Combat King II, which refueled the Pave Hawk to give the helicopter the endurance needed for a second sortie.

The HH-60 located the wreckage, landed and extracted the uninjured pilot.

The crew transported the survivor to the Birchwood Airport north of Anchorage and released him to the Anchorage Police Department.

Alaska Air National Guard Capt. Seth Peterson, AKRCC senior controller, stressed the importance of keeping 406 ELT registration information up to date to expedite rescue operations. He said it is helpful having multiple means of satellite communication such as a 406 ELT, a satellite phone, or a satellite device with text capability.

"The more the better," he said. "If you have a registered 406, and we can talk to you, it makes for a smoother rescue operation."

For these missions, 210th RQS, 212th RQS and the AKRCC received credit for three saves. For the second mission, 211th RQS received credit for one save.

## **ARCTIC GUARDIAN CHOSEN AS AIR NATIONAL GUARD'S TOP MILITARY FIREFIGHTER**

By David Bedard | 176th Wing Public Affairs

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — The National Guard Bureau recognized a 176th Civil Engineer Squadron firefighter as the 2021 National Guard military firefighter of the year.

Master Sgt. Tyler Larimer, 176th CES chief of training, said Alaska Air National Guard Staff Sgt. Brenden Turney, 176th CES firefighter and station captain, earned the award because he embodies the image of a well-rounded firefighter.

"The things that go into the award very much reflect our career field," Larimer said. "We have many aspects to our job, which includes operations, administration, training and readiness. All of those things have to tie together to make us successful as a department. The reason we put Turney up for

this award is because he really does show exemplary performance in all four categories.”

Turney, a native of Anchorage, said he earned the award serving as a traditional part-time Guardsman working as a firefighter who is trained to respond to everything from a kitchen fire to an airplane crash.

“In military firefighting, we do it all,” he said. “We go through Fire Fighter I and II [instruction], which comprises the fundamentals of structural firefighting and general firefighting, and then we earn our ARFF certification, which stands for airport rescue firefighting, that specifically applies to firefighting techniques for airframes.”

Turney said airfield firefighting is especially exciting and challenging because of the unique nature of tactical aircraft.

“You’re dealing with some extreme hazards,” he said. “There’s fuel involved. There’s munitions involved. You’re working to protect people who are in serious danger – a danger that can develop very rapidly. There are no simple answers on how to perform a rescue here.”

Another aspect that makes Turney a well-rounded firefighter, Larimer said, is his many different experiences working with other departments in Alaska’s civil sector as well as military departments overseas.

“Every department has its own culture,” he said. “Each location has its own unique responses, its own unique hazards, and they have unique tools to respond to what they have in their jurisdiction. I get to experience different versions of this job, which enables me to have a bigger toolset and to be able to teach more, do more and to have different options when responding to a real emergency.”

Larimer said Turney also earned high marks for his leadership, a notion echoed by the young noncommissioned officer.

“My job, especially as a new supervisor and NCO is to lead my crew and take care of their needs,” he said. “My job is to be an expert in the field, and to find every way I can to apply what I have learned to support the mission.”

As well-received as the award is, Turney said the ultimate prize lies at the end of his pursuit of a full-time firefighter job. Though curiosity of military service brought him to the Air National Guard, his ultimate goal is to join a fire department.

"I wanted to serve," Turney said. "I am very curious about experiences, and the only way to satisfy those curiosities is to experience them."

He said his goal really came into focus after earning his Emergency Medical Technician qualification at a local university.

"From there, it was a matter of figuring out how to put this skill to work," he said. "I looked at local volunteer opportunities. I applied with the local fire department. It didn't all work out right away, but I really wanted to pursue this."

Fortunately, a friend told Turney he could get the training and experience he was looking for in the National Guard.

"It's unique in that you are fully supported while you pursue the training," he said. "You don't have to worry about anything else; you are 100 percent focused."

Larimer said, since Turney joined the 176th CES, he has gone after every available deployment and temporary duty assignment, including a six-month stint with the JBER Fire Department. Additionally, Turney volunteers with the Alaska Mountain Rescue Group, which performs high-angle rescues throughout the Alaska back country.

Turney said, though he wasn't seeking recognition, he was pleased to get the nod as top military firefighter.

"I don't pursue awards like this intentionally, but I see it as a gauge that I'm doing my job well, because everyone wants to feel like they're doing good work," he said.

## **ARCTIC GUARDIANS ASSIST NATIONAL PARK SERVICE RESCUE OF INJURED CLIMBER ON DENALI**

By David Bedard | 176th Wing Public Affairs

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — Alaska Air National Guardsmen of the 176th Wing assisted the National Park Service in rescuing an injured climber June 12 on Denali, North America's highest mountain peak.

The mission opened in response to a request for assistance from the National Park Service to the Alaska Rescue Coordination Center. The injured

climber's party used a satellite communication device to call for help after being injured in a fall.

Tucker Chenoweth, South District Ranger, Denali National Park, said a Ranger team, including an embedded pararescuemen (PJ) from 212th Rescue Squadron, Alaska Air National Guard Tech. Sgt. Matt Steible, provided the climber immediate care.

"We have a Ranger team at High Camp that includes a PJ from 212th," he said. "They were able to get out and access the patient, who was a good quarter mile, half mile from camp, and they were able to stabilize the patient."

Chenoweth said NPS could perform the rescue using the park's A-Star B3e helicopter, but it needed high-altitude, high-speed weather reconnaissance to safely fly through weather stemming from the large East Fork Fire in Southwest Alaska.

At the request of the AKRCC, Alaska Air National Guardsmen of 211th and 212th Rescue Squadrons launched on a 211th RQS HC-130J Combat King II search and rescue aircraft.

"The biggest challenge was there was a flow coming out of the southwest that was bringing all of the wildfire smoke into the range, and it was plugging up basically everything north of Talkeetna in the mountains up to about 13,000 feet," Chenoweth said. "We couldn't launch our helicopter without assistance from the RCC and with the C-130 looking at general weather patterns and trends as well as holes coming through the weather."

Once the HC-130 was flying over the rescue route, NPS launched their rescue helicopter.

"Our A-Star took off from Talkeetna, and the C-130 basically guided the A-Star through the different layers and gave feedback that the upper mountain, 14[,200-foot] Camp, and High Camp were in the clear," Chenoweth said. "One of the challenges for us operating at that elevation is fuel because we try and go really light."

The on-scene Ranger team had to use multiple ropes to lower the patient to a suitable landing site for the A-Star. Still, the slope required a technical "STEP maneuver" to extract the climber.

"In the STEP maneuver, the helicopter comes in and remains under power and puts the front skids down, but it can't drop the collective – take power

off – it flies basically into the hill,” Chenoweth said. “Then the Rangers were able to open the door and load the whole spinal-immobilization sled into the helicopter.”

After loading the patient at 17,100 feet, the helicopter dropped down to 14 Camp and picked up a paramedic, and the HC-130 guided the A-Star back to Talkeetna, confirming weather was still favorable for the approach and landing there.

At the Talkeetna airport, the A-Star met local emergency medical services and a civilian medevac helicopter, which evacuated the patient to Providence Alaska Medical Center in Anchorage.

Chenoweth said NPS appreciated the joint effort in ensuring a rapid rescue under challenging weather and elevation conditions.

“We are sincerely thankful to the RCC for coordination and the 211th C-130 crew for their efforts,” he said. “And, of course, we are grateful for our ongoing relationship with the 212th.”

For this mission, the National Park Service, 210th RQS, 212th RQS and the AKRCC received credit for one save.

## **PAVE HAWK SPECIAL MISSIONS AVIATOR HONES MARKSMANSHIP SKILLS TO RAZOR’S EDGE**

By David Bedard | 176th Wing Public Affairs

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — A typical day at the office for Alaska Air National Guard Senior Master Sgt. Corey Ercolani often involves spraying 7.62 mm bullets from the door of a speeding HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter at a cyclic rate of 4,000 rounds per minute. That’s 67 rounds per second.

During the 2022 Alaska Adjutant General Match in June, Ercolani had to slow things down quite a bit, deliberately taking aim with his M9 pistol or M4 carbine as he competed against Army and Air National Guardsmen for top honors.

Following a battery of marksmanship tests, Ercolani’s efforts bagged the Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, native laurels as a member of the Governor’s Twenty. As the name implies, the crescent-shaped patch denotes he is among the best military shooters in the state.



Ercolani is a Pave Hawk special missions aviator with the 176th Wing's 210th Rescue Squadron. The SMA Air Force specialty code combined the two positions into one for the only enlisted crewman assigned to the helicopter.

"A SMA is a mix between a flight engineer and an aerial gunner," he said. "They consolidated those two career fields a while back. We run takeoff and landing data for the helicopter, operate the hoist, operate the guns, and, essentially, we are systems-knowledge experts who can diagnose problems with the helicopter."

Ercolani operates both the 7.62 mm GAU-2 minigun and the .50-caliber GAU-18 machine gun. Though it doesn't pack the per-round punch of the .50, Ercolani said he prefers the rapid-firing six-barreled weapon.

"The minigun is electrically driven," Ercolani explained. "What it does is a motor spins the barrel cluster, and a feeder/de-linker de-links the ammunition and feeds it into the barrel bolt – each barrel has its own bolt."

The GAU-2's combination of precision parts adds up to a distinct ripping sound when it lets loose. Though Ercolani said he prefers the electric Gatling gun, he is just as happy using the GAU-18 to meet a clutch situation.

During the summer of 2012 while on deployment in Afghanistan, Ercolani's HH-60 came to the aid of an allied armored column whose lead vehicle was disabled during an ambush. British AH-64 Apache attack helicopters took the lead using their 30mm chain guns to good effect.

"We got overhead, and I noticed enemy muzzle flashes and dust getting kicked up and immediately began to engage with my .50-cal," he recalled. "We did two or three passes, and the Apaches were shooting down there as well, and I went through about 300 rounds."

Through frequent visits to the helicopter gunnery range, Ercolani said providing accurate suppressive machine gun fire has become second nature.

"It's actually a lot easier than you would think," he said. "We train all the time. Throughout the course of my military career, I've probably blown through millions of rounds of ammunition. It's an insane amount."

The SMA said he relishes stepping away from his machine guns for the challenges of rifle and pistol marksmanship, where deliberate technique is required.

"I actually enjoy doing this because it's a lot more complicated than shooting a machine gun," Ercolani said. "There's something about the fundamentals of marksmanship. You can't lie your way out of it. You could have the coolest gear, but if you don't know what you're doing with it, it doesn't matter."

Though he bested dozens of other Airmen and Soldiers during TAG Match, Ercolani said he has to frequently practice his perishable sharpshooter skills. He also said he enjoys learning from others.

"What I love about this kind of marksmanship is you don't ever get to know everything," he said. "Every time I shoot, I'm always learning something else I need to practice on. It's just like a martial art; you really have to practice at it to stay at a high level."

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## **RSD SCHEDULE**

### **MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR REGULARLY SCHEDULED DRILL WEEKENDS**

July: 30, 31

August: 1-4 (Quarterly drillers)

September: No drill

October: 15, 16

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## **WEEKEND DINING FACILITY HOURS**

The Iditarod (Elmendorf) Dining Facility will be closed on Saturday August 1, as renovations are to be completed.

On Saturday members will be encouraged to have lunch at the Wilderness in (Bldg. 647 Ft Richardson).

The Wilderness Inn serves "brunch" from 1000-1400 on the weekend.

The Army DFAC will honor the provided ESM roster and not charge DSGs for their meal.

If anyone gets turned away on the Army side please contact MSgt Franz Deters 907-903-5545

If AGRs or officers wish to eat on the Army side, a flat rate of \$5.65 will apply.

On Sunday the Iditarod will be open again for business (normal hours).

There will not be POD support for the flight line over the weekend (located near F-22 hangers)

**Normal Hours:**

BREAKFAST: 0630-0830  
GRAB-N-GO: 0900-1030  
LUNCH: 1030-1330  
GRAB-N-GO: 1330-1630  
DINNER: 1630-1830  
MIDNIGHT: 2300-0100

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**GATE HOURS**

For latest gate hours, visit <https://www.jber.jb.mil/Units/673abw/673SFS/>

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**POINTS OF INTEREST**

**176th Wing**

Website: <http://www.176wg.ang.af.mil/>  
Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/176thWing>  
Instagram: <http://www.instagram.com/176thwing>  
Flickr: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/176wg/>  
DVIDs: <https://www.dvidshub.net/unit/176WPA>  
SharePoint (requires CAC):  
<https://cs2.eis.af.mil/sites/12468/Pages/176%20Wing.aspx>

**Alaska National Guard**

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/AKNationalGuard>  
Instagram: <http://www.instagram.com/alaskanationalguard>  
Flickr: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/alaskanationalguard>  
Youtube: <http://www.youtube.com/user/NationalGuardAlaska>  
Twitter: <http://twitter.com/AKNationalGuard>

**JBER**

Website: <http://www.jber.jb.mil/>  
Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/JBERAK>  
Newspaper: <http://www.dvidshub.net/publication/397/arctic-warrior>

**Fulltime Job Opportunities:**

<http://dmva.alaska.gov/employment.htm>

**HRO – Alaska National Guard:**

<http://dmva.alaska.gov/HRO>

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